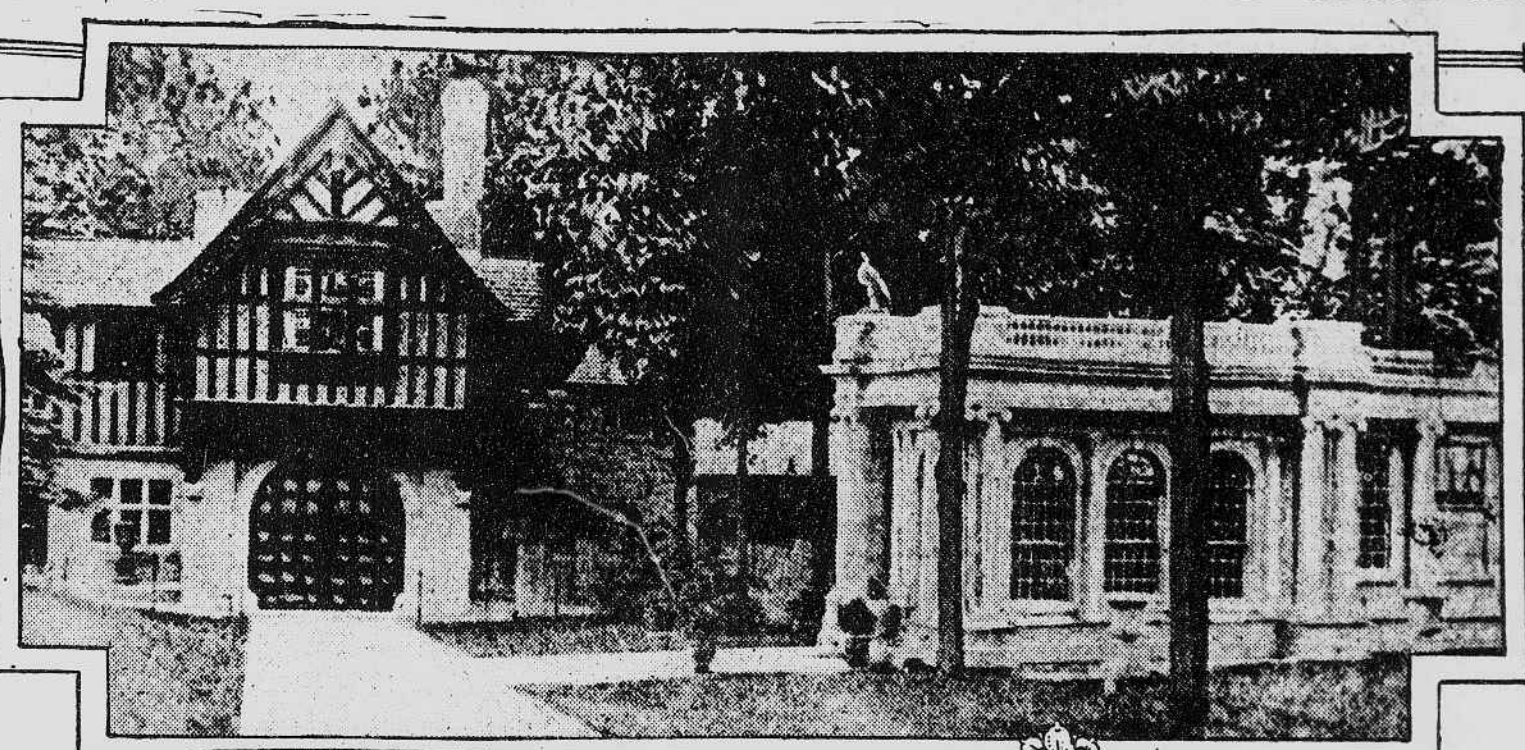
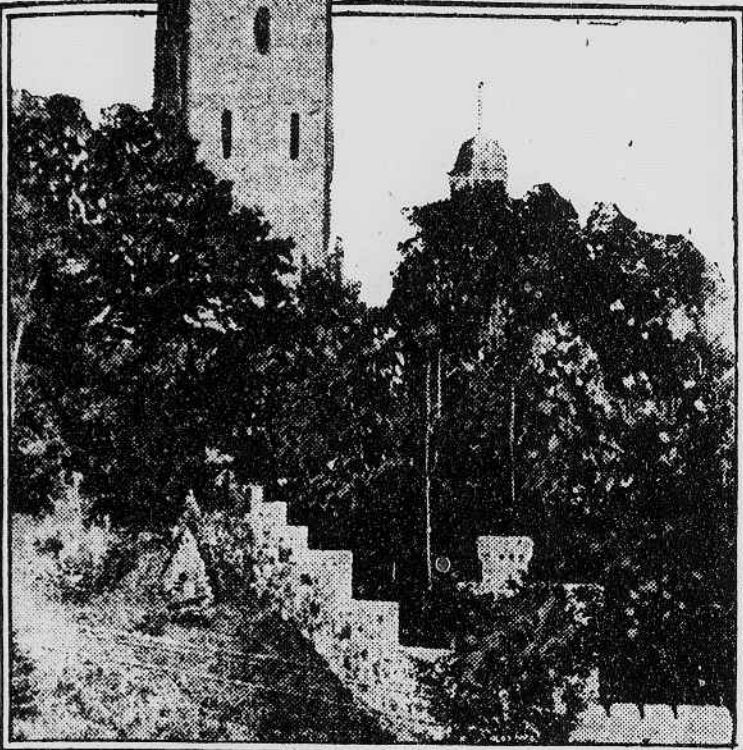




Searles Lived in Gloomy and Feudal Grandeur; Public Kept Aloof by Walls and Armed Guards



By Arnold Prince
THE sentinelled estate of Pine Lodge, which the late Edward F. Searles set down in the midst of the pleasant countryside at Methuen, Mass., is to have for its new master a ten-year-old boy, Benjamin Allen Rowland, of Philadelphia, who is to assume the name of Searles and found a new family dynasty in that peaceful domain.

IN THIS baronial tower on the Searles estate at Methuen is a set of chimes which rings at regular intervals

AT THE right is Arthur T. Walker, to whom Searles left a fortune

By the terms of the will left by Searles this much of the "\$50,000,000 fortune" is withheld from Arthur T. Walker, of Brooklyn, who was made over in a day from a salaried worker to a man of many millions. And so, if all goes well, the wall-begirt grounds, the towers and unscalable masonry protected by guards are to resound to the happy laughter of children, the testator having specially requested that the two little brothers of Benjamin Allen Rowland and his mother take up their residence within them.

Methuen Unconvinced

But Methuen, always apprehensive of anything undertaken by the former owner of the "castle," is not certain that the children will come, or at least stay long, and this state of mind is characteristic of the way the community has long looked upon the reclusive and his acts. To the inhabitants there was always something a little unreal and fantastic about Searles—and this is a feeling which is apt to overtake even a casual visitor to the family seat.

Methuen is about twenty-five miles from Boston on the Boston & Maine Railroad, and a short trolley ride from Lawrence, one of the centers of the cotton mill country. At Methuen one sees wide, placid streets; roomy frame houses with old-fashioned gardens, a profusion of trees, which in the summer all but hide the homes in their leaves, and a quiet, easy-going population.

Then further out is the Searles estate.

Here one suddenly encounters walls suggesting the bastions of feudal days; men on guard at the high gates, although against whom or what puzzles the mind, and overhead a battlemented tower, the effect on the spectator being that of going for a stroll in some sylvan retreat and coming upon a medieval knight, fiercely clad in armor, stalking through the sunshine.

At least, that was the way it seemed on a recent day, after the will disposing of the property had been read. The tiny town lay against a hill like a coin that had dropped out a giant's pocket and rolled into the meadow. Main Street, with its four or five stores, meandered leisurely past the red brick City Hall and tavern perched precariously on an embankment. All about were pines and the maples, oaks and elms, with flowers showing in front of the houses.

A Grim Picture

Then at a turn the road came suddenly to an abrupt end of formidable stone walls with a guard standing at the entrance, and the whole scene changed at once. Something friendly and dour crept into the atmosphere, which could not be dispelled until the place had been left behind and sunshine filled the fields again.

Methuen finds it hard to accept the new arrangement for Pine Lodge, because it never quite understood its former owner or his ways. The man was always undertaking so many things which he never finished, and he was always building but



VICTOR SEARLES, nephew of Edward F. Searles, who was left only \$250,000 of the immense estate

either tearing them down again or making them over.

The same was true of the imposing places he put up at Great Barrington, Mass.; Windham, N. H.; Stillwater and other spots. At Great Barrington, the birthplace of his wife, he spent \$900,000 on a country seat, Kellogg Terrace, but soon afterward virtually abandoned it as a residence. There was a report that he meant to sell it, but even this deal never went through. At Windham he was always making changes, adding new walls, new gates, new inclosures, without ever being entirely satisfied with any of them.

A Driving Unrest

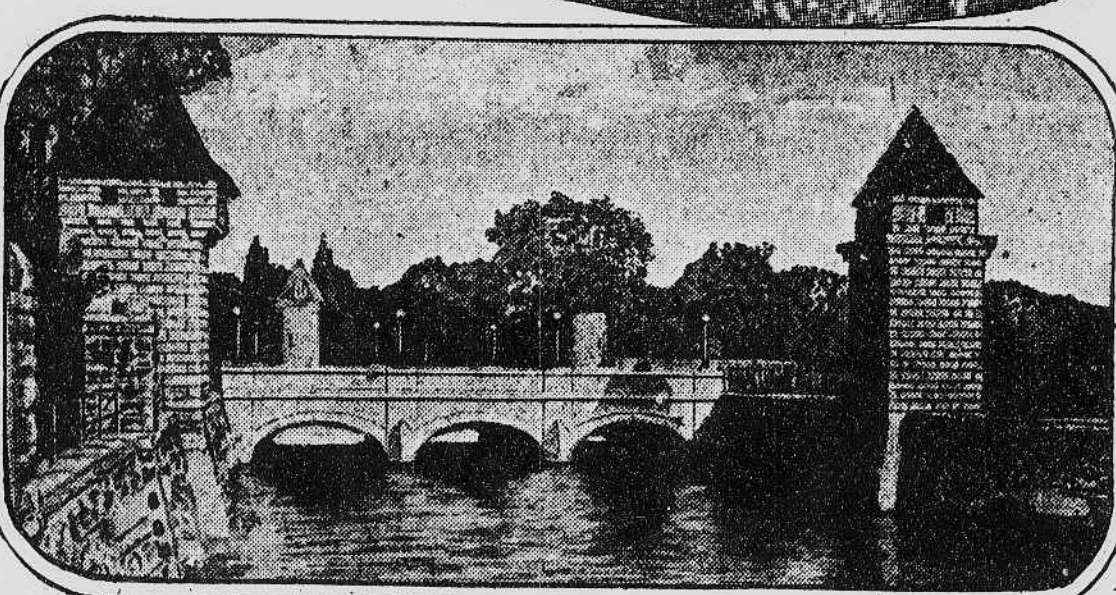
It was as if the man were under the influence of some driving impulse which he himself could not explain, but which kept him always on the move, now tearing down what he had built and now beginning the work all over again, or introducing some feature which altered its appearance entirely.

Once a resident of the town—he was the editor of its only paper—printed an article which might have suggested an explanation, but soon after it appeared unpleasant things began to happen to him. The edi-

tor, a large sum to design a beautiful monument of George Washington to be placed in what was to be Washington Park, near Pine

riage to the sixty-eight-year-old widow from whom he inherited his money and the widespread criticism it evoked, and not many months afterward he lost the ownership of the paper. When he tried his hand at being a baker he found that misfortune followed him into that calling also, and he finally had to give up his store and go elsewhere to make a living.

After that Methuen was a little more cautious about what he said or wrote about the owner of Pine Lodge, and the round of building and making changes went on without attracting audible comment.



SEARLES, who loved stone walls, built this bridge for the town of Methuen

before the shaft was unveiled, and the park is still uncompleted.

The fatal gift for never finishing anything pursued Searles into other undertakings, which explains why when he has bequeathed Pine Lodge to a ten-year-old boy Methuen continues to wonder if this time something fixed and definite is to result from it.

A Surprise to the Town

The gift to Benjamin Allen Rowland was made through the same remarkable instrument which bestowed the bulk of the "\$50,000,000 fortune" upon Arthur T. Walker. No one except the lawyers, apparently, knew that Walker was to be transformed overnight from a salaried employee into a multimillionaire, and an equally limited few had any inkling of the inheritance that was to fall to young Rowland. It is an astonishing thing that in a community as small as Methuen, where the acts of every one are within such easy range of observation of everybody else, no one even knew that Searles was acquainted with the boy or his family.

Benjamin Allen Rowland is the son of Mary R. Rowland, of Philadelphia, a cousin of Searles. The boy has two brothers, George Rodman Rowland, nine years old, and John Bruce Rowland, eight, who are to inherit Pine Lodge in turn in case the brother with the right of tenure dies. Mrs. Rowland received \$1,000,000 outright under the will and another \$2,500,000 was set aside as a trust fund for Benjamin,

fund of \$500,000 each also was created for the two other boys. Going into details as to the occupancy of Pine Lodge, the reclusive made this request in his will:

"It is my earnest wish and desire that Benjamin Allen Rowland, George Rodman Rowland and John Bruce Rowland, the children of my cousin, Mary R. Rowland, all of whom are minors, shall assume the family name of Searles, and that such of them as shall become entitled to a life estate in the family home known as Pine Lodge in Methuen, Mass., shall maintain the said Pine Lodge as a place of permanent

THE MAIN hall of the Searles estate at Methuen, Mass.

the testator's "earnest wish and desire" that they adopt the name of Searles; but so habituated is Methuen to seeing the Searles undertakings left unfinished that it cannot bring itself to believe that this time things will go through as planned.

"Something will happen. You'll see," at least a half dozen inhabitants of the place predicted to me after the will was read. "They always have and they will again."

Possibly the "something" will be the prospective suit by Albert Vic-

ONE of the entrance lodges of the splendid Searles estate at Methuen, Mass.

eight-year-old woman from whom he inherited his wealth.

The public memory is short, and so few will recall the sensational trial at Salem, Mass., when Timothy Nolan Hopkins attempted to break the will made by the former Mrs. Mark Hopkins, widow of the California pioneer, in favor of Searles, her second husband. It is considered not at all unlikely that the bitterness caused by that suit had something to do with forcing Searles to become a recluse and deciding to erect an edifice on the site of his boyhood home which, by its very magnificence, would overshadow the unfavorable reputation that resulted from the litigation.

His Dearest Wish

The few persons who knew Searles intimately admit that the perpetuation of Pine Lodge as the Searles family seat was one of his dearest ambitions of his lonely life, and yet it is significant of his character that in attempting to carry out this ambition he did not delegate it to Victor A. Searles, his nephew, who already bears his name and whom he "cut off" with a bequest of \$250,000, but entrusted it to a more distant relative, a ten-year-old boy, who may or may not adopt his name.

The marriage for which Searles was so widely criticized took place in Trinity Chapel, New York City, in 1887. Searles was then forty-six years old and Mrs. Mary Hopkins, the bride, sixty-eight.

Mrs. Hopkins was the widow of Mark Hopkins, one of the "Forty-niners," who went to California



THIS painting depicting the charge of the Rough Riders up San Juan Hill is the work of Victor Searles, and has a place of honor in the home of his uncle

ner in which I maintained the property during my lifetime.

Asked That They Live There

"It is my desire, but I impose no trust or conditions to that effect, that during the tender years of the said children of the said Mary R. Rowland, they and their mother shall make their family home at Pine Lodge."

It is, of course, not suggested by any one that the Rowlands will reject the bequests, totaling \$4,500,000, and leave the estate to the state.

tor Searles, also a nephew, to break the will.

The predictions are not of any importance in themselves, and their only significance, if they have any, is as they are taken in connection with the stubborn fight that was made by the former owner of Pine Lodge to establish a monument in the neighborhood which would perpetuate his name and lay forever the hostile wrath of criticism growing out of his marriage to the sixty-

during the gold rush and laid the foundation of his fortune by going into the hardware business at Sacramento with the late Collis P. Huntington. Huntington and Hopkins sold prospecting outfits to the miners, accepting in payment mining stock which made them rich.

Boycott of Poverty

The employment of his money in cooperation with the Crocker and others to build the Central Pacific Railroad, now a part of the Southern Pacific system, is a matter of history, and it was after this project had achieved success that Searles

(Continued on next page)